

MEDIA RELEASE

**Attention: News Director
For Immediate Release
January 12, 2007**



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
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Western District of Kentucky**

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**BALLARD COUNTY MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO
BURGLARY OF FEDERAL CREDIT UNIONS
AND FIREARMS VIOLATIONS**

David L. Huber, United States Attorney for the Western District of Kentucky, announced today that **PATRICK GENE HOPPER**, age 29, of 4245 Rodgers Road, Kevil, Kentucky, in Ballard County, **pled guilty** to illegal entry into three federal credit unions with the intent to commit robbery, and carrying and possessing a firearm to use in the robbery while he was subject to a domestic violence order.

The maximum potential penalties are a combined 75-year term of imprisonment, including a 5-year consecutive mandatory minimum term of imprisonment, a combined \$1,250,000 fine, and 5 years supervised release.

Hopper admitted that on December 25, 2005, he entered the Federal Credit Unions on Tully Street and on Lone Oak Road in McCracken County, Kentucky, with the intent to commit robbery. **Hopper** also admitted that on December 30, 2005, he again entered the Federal Credit Union on Tully Street with the intent to commit robbery and carried a loaded 9mm Smith and Wesson handgun to use in that robbery. **Hopper** further admitted that at the time he possessed the firearm he was prohibited from possessing firearms because he was subject to an order of domestic violence that had been issued by the McCracken County Family Court in September 2004.

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About 6:00 a.m. on December 30, 2005, a citizen observed **Hopper** entering the Credit Union on Tully Street through the ceiling area of the drive-through window, and called law enforcement officers. Officers of the Paducah Police Department, McCracken County Sheriff's Department, and Federal Bureau of Investigation immediately responded. While officers were inside of the Credit Union, they heard **Hopper** discharge the handgun. After pepper spray was introduced into the attic area, the officers heard a second discharge of the handgun and exited the building. Trained negotiators from the Paducah Police Department communicated with **Hopper** over the course of several hours. **Hopper** surrendered about 3:00 p.m. on the afternoon of December 30, 2005.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney David Sparks and was investigated by the Paducah Police Department, McCracken County Sheriff's Department, and Federal Bureau of Investigation.

This is a **Project Backfire** prosecution. **Project Backfire** is a partnership of state and federal law enforcement which targets violent offenders for prosecution to the fullest extent of state and federal law.

The plea was entered before Hon. Thomas B. Russell, Judge, United States District Court, Paducah, Kentucky.

Hopper is scheduled to be sentenced before Judge Russell on April 24, 2007, at 11:30 a.m., in Paducah, Kentucky.

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